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Partnerships for sustainable development**Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

Partnerships for sustainable development are voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives undertaken by any combination of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and other organizations and institutions which contribute to expediting the implementation of intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments in Agenda 21 and/or the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The present report provides a general summary of information on the 334 partnerships for sustainable development registered with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development as at 1 February 2008, as well as a more detailed summary of partnerships focusing on agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa. In all, 95 registered partnerships of 334 have identified the thematic cluster for the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the primary focus of their work.

The report points out that while these initiatives vary significantly in terms of sustainable development issues addressed, management structures, number of partners and scope, there are certain factors that are common to all registered partnerships. Through the pooling of knowledge, skills and resources, these collaborative initiatives are working to find innovative solutions to sustainable development challenges and to develop knowledge networks to contribute to an environment of informed decision-making.

* E/CN.17/2008/1.



As requested by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session, this report serves as a basis for the Commission's discussion, during its review session, on the contribution of partnerships to the implementation of intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments.

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I. Introduction

1. Voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnerships working towards facilitating and expediting the implementation of sustainable development goals and commitments have proved to be an important complementary outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. As at 1 February 2008, a total of 334 such partnerships had voluntarily registered with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development, of which 95 had indicated that the thematic cluster for the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development was the primary focus of their activities.

2. Partnerships for sustainable development have a special character; they are specifically linked to the implementation of globally agreed commitments in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation), Agenda 21 and/or the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. However, as stressed at the Summit, these partnerships are not a substitute for Government responsibilities and commitments; they are intended to strengthen implementation by involving those relevant stakeholders that can make a contribution to sustainable development. Commitments by Governments remain the cornerstone of national, regional and global efforts to pursue sustainable development.

3. The Commission on Sustainable Development was designated by the Summit as the focal point for discussion on partnerships that promote sustainable development. At its eleventh session, in 2003, the Commission stressed that partnerships in the context of the Summit process and its follow-up should be developed and implemented in accordance with a set of agreed criteria and guidelines,¹ taking note of the preliminary work undertaken on partnerships during the preparatory process for the Summit, including the Bali guiding principles² and General Assembly resolution 56/76. Subsequently, the Assembly, in its resolutions 58/129, 60/215 and 62/211, and the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2003/61, recognized the important contribution of partnerships for sustainable development to the implementation of internationally agreed sustainable development commitments and goals and the continuing efforts of the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development to promote such partnerships.

4. The Commission agreed that information on partnerships for sustainable development should be made publicly available. As part of this information-sharing process, the Commission secretariat was requested to develop a partnerships website and database which would be accessible to all interested parties.

5. In February 2004, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat launched the Commission on Sustainable Development Partnerships for Sustainable Development website³ and database.⁴ The interactive web-accessible database contains information on registered partnerships based on voluntary self-reports from partnership focal points. These reports help keep the partnerships

¹ See E/CN.17/2003/6, chapter I, section A, draft resolution I, paras. 21-24.

² For the full text of the Bali guiding principles, see http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/prepcom4docs/bali_documents/annex_partnership.pdf.

³ <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>.

⁴ <http://esa.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/>.

database up to date and form the basis for summary reports prepared by the Commission secretariat.

6. The Commission on Sustainable Development partnerships website and database were redesigned in 2006 and again in 2007 to improve navigation and facilitate access to the various new information resources and tools. New features added to the partnerships website include a partnerships events calendar; searchable listings of web links; publications and articles related to partnerships; simplified access to registration and updating procedures as well as partnerships news; and an online discussion forum (e-forum) where members of registered partnerships can network and exchange experiences.

7. During its biennial review sessions, the Commission will discuss the contribution of partnerships to the implementation of the intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development goals and objectives with a view to sharing lessons learned and best practices, as well as identifying and addressing problems, gaps and constraints. The present report, containing synthesized information on partnerships, as requested by the Commission at its eleventh session, is submitted for consideration by the Commission at its sixteenth session with the aim of facilitating those discussions.

II. Partnerships trends

8. Partnerships for sustainable development must have certain key characteristics (identified in the criteria and guidelines on partnerships set out at the eleventh session of the Commission, the Bali guiding principles and General Assembly resolution 56/76), including sectoral and geographical balance; multi-stakeholder involvement; a relationship to the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and a predictable and sustained resource base. The following sections explore some of these aspects and identify emerging trends within partnerships currently registered with the secretariat of the Commission.

A. Overall numbers

9. A total of 334 partnerships were registered with the secretariat as at 1 February 2008.

10. Nearly two thirds of those partnerships (209) registered around the time of the holding of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and 125 partnerships have registered since the Summit. Partnership registration increased by almost 60 per cent between 2002 and 2007, and new partnerships are continuing to register. In all, 207 partnerships participated in Commission on Sustainable Development partnership fair activities in the period from 2004 to 2007.

B. Sectoral coverage

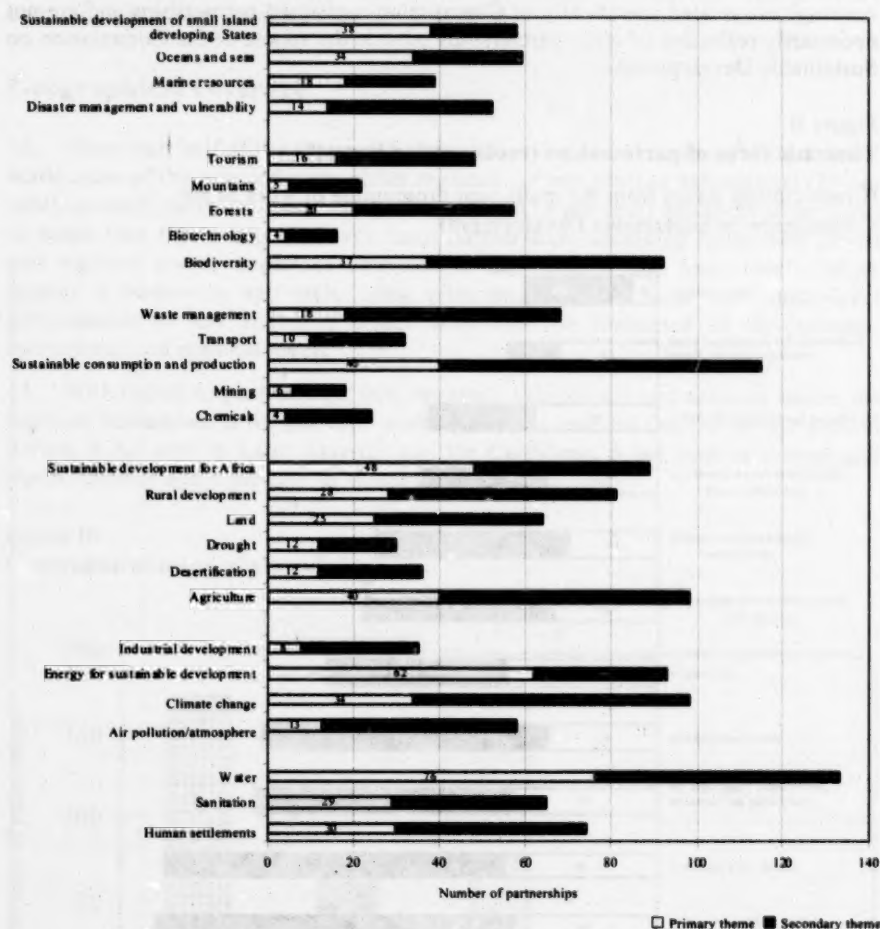
11. The majority of partnerships working towards sustainable development tend to have a multisectoral approach to implementation. Figure I shows the distribution of the different thematic focal areas of partnerships, broken down by primary and secondary theme. To provide a contextual reference for partnership initiatives and

the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, thematic clusters from the Commission's multi-year programme of work were used to group the sustainable development issues.

Figure 1

Thematic focus of partnerships registered with the Commission on Sustainable Development^a

(Clustered according to the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development)



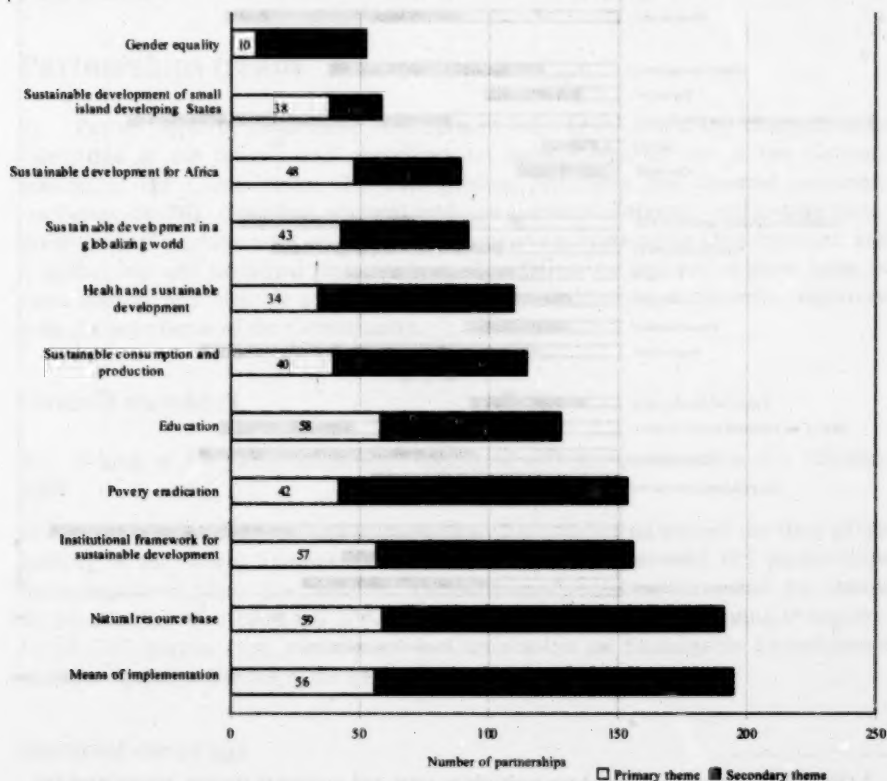
^a Given that most partnerships have multiple primary and secondary themes, aggregating the number of partnerships per theme would exceed the total number of registered partnerships.

12. The thematic areas being addressed by registered partnerships cover a wide spectrum. More than half (53 per cent) of all registered partnerships are working in the broad area of protection and management of natural resources. More than one fifth of all registered partnerships are working in the areas of agriculture (28 per cent), biodiversity (27 per cent), climate change (28 per cent), energy (28 per cent), human settlements (22 per cent), rural development (23 per cent) and water (40 per cent).

13. On the other hand, some resource areas continue to have proportionately fewer registered partnerships: less than one tenth of registered partnerships cover biotechnology (5 per cent), chemicals (7 per cent), drought (8 per cent), mining (5 per cent), mountains (7 per cent) and transport (9 per cent). These gaps in coverage are related specifically to Commission-registered partnerships and are not necessarily reflective of other partnerships outside the sphere of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Figure II
Thematic focus of partnerships (cross-cutting issues)^a

(Cross-cutting issues from the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development)



^a Given that most partnerships have multiple primary and secondary themes, aggregating the number of partnerships per theme would exceed the total number of registered partnerships.

14. Cross-cutting sustainable development issue areas are taken into account by most partnerships (see figure II). Capacity-building and technology transfer continue to be key elements in implementation strategies, while effecting change in the institutional framework for sustainable development remains a priority area for 47 per cent of registered partnerships.

15. Sustainable development in a globalizing world (27 per cent) and sustainable development for Africa (26 per cent) are areas of concern for more than a quarter of all partnerships. One third of all registered partnerships are working in areas of education (37 per cent), health and sustainable development (32 per cent) and sustainable consumption and production (34 per cent). A total of 42 per cent are committed to poverty eradication.

C. Geographical coverage

16. More than half of the registered partnerships are global in scope (51 per cent), while most of the remainder are either regional (20 per cent) or subregional (23 per cent). A small number of partnerships are national (5 per cent) and local (1 per cent) in scope (see figure III). However, most partnerships, including those with global and regional scope, undertake activities at the national and local levels. Many employ a bottom-up approach, using pilot projects with local community-level participation to test strategies which may then be replicated at the national, subregional and regional levels.

17. With regard to partnerships with regional, subregional and national scope, the regional breakdown is 40 per cent working in Asia and the Pacific, 40 per cent in Africa, 8 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 per cent in Europe and North America and 4 per cent in Western Asia (see figure IV).

Figure III
Geographical scope of partnerships

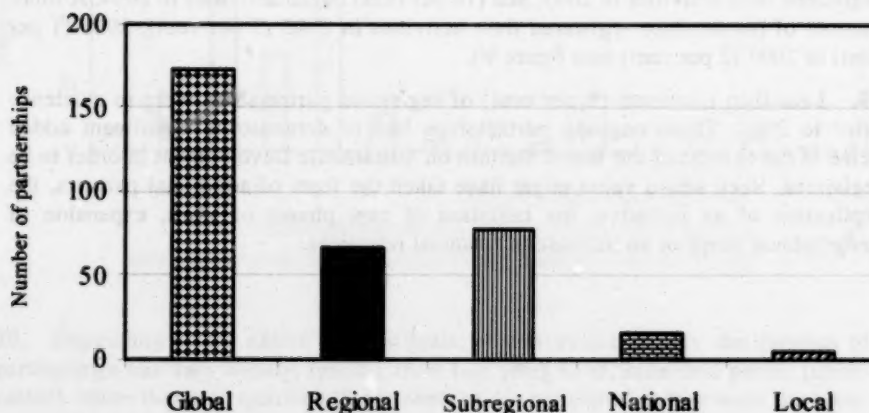
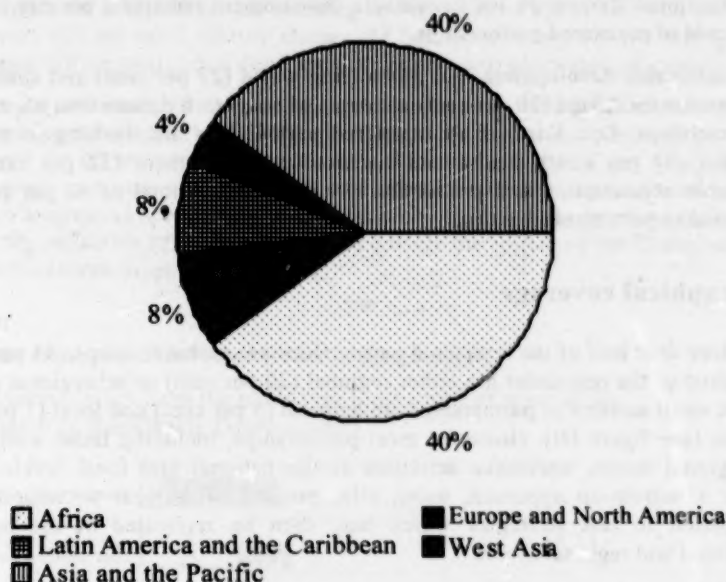


Figure IV
Regional coverage of partnerships



D. Time frame

18. The majority of the partnerships registered with the Commission secretariat were launched at or around the time of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. More than half (209) the registered partnerships were initiated in 2002, the year of the Summit. Less than one third (26 per cent) of the partnerships registered their activities in 2003, and (10 per cent) began activities in 2004. A small number of partnerships registered their activities in 2005 (3 per cent), 2006 (1 per cent) or 2007 (2 per cent) (see figure V).

19. Less than one tenth (8 per cent) of registered partnerships were in existence prior to 2002. These ongoing partnerships had to demonstrate significant added value in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in order to be registered. Such added value might have taken the form of additional partners, the replication of an initiative, the initiation of new phases of work, expansion of geographical scope or an increase in financial resources.

Figure V
Year of partnership registration

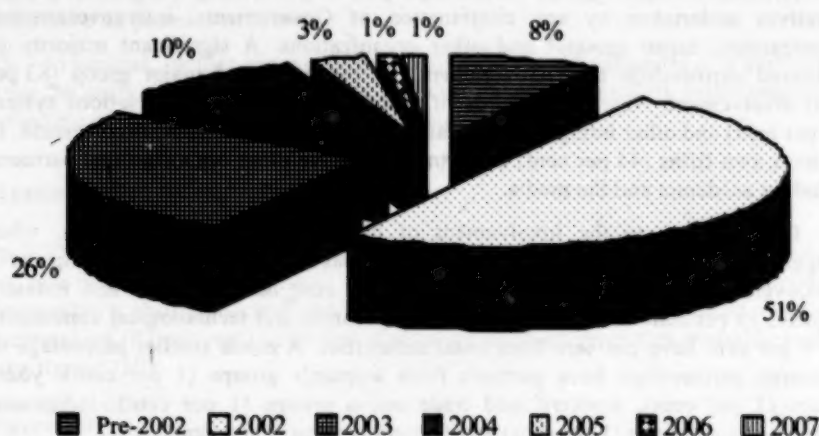
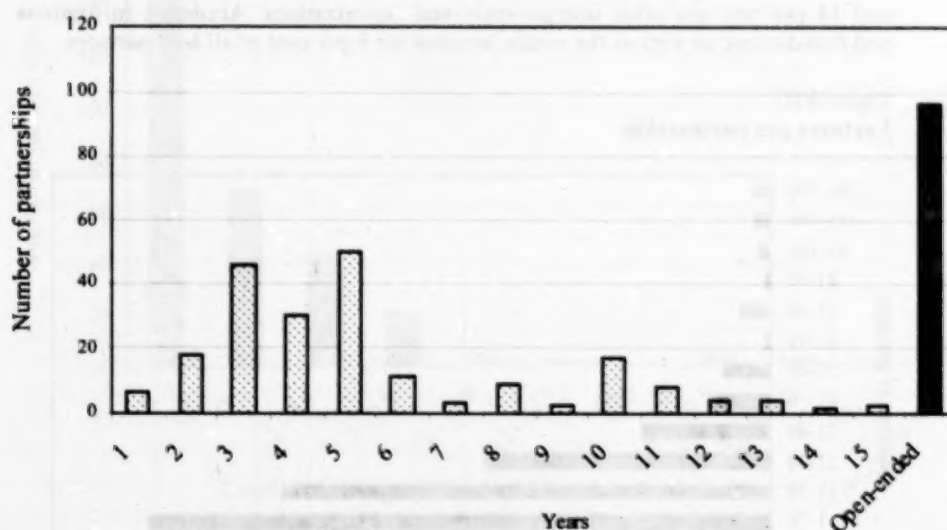


Figure VI
Duration of partnerships



20. Depending on the nature of their goals, objectives and targets, the duration of partnerships can vary widely, ranging from two years to an undefined period (open-ended). More than one quarter (28 per cent) of the registered partnerships are open-ended. More than half (58 per cent) of the partnerships list an end date 10 years hence or earlier (see figure VI).

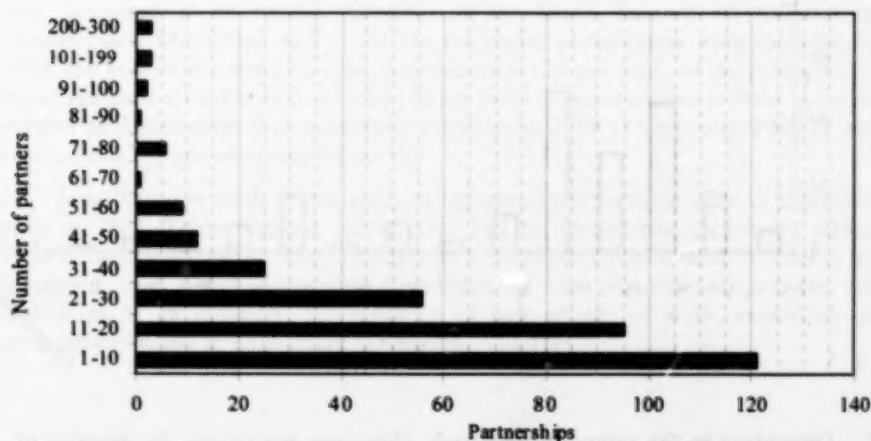
E. Partners involved

21. By definition, registered partnerships are voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives undertaken by any combination of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups⁵ and other organizations. A significant majority of registered partnerships have Government (83 per cent) and major group (83 per cent) involvement. Nearly two thirds of partnerships have United Nations system (62 per cent) and other intergovernmental organization (61 per cent) involvement. In addition, two fifths (44 per cent) of partnerships have other organizational partners, including academia and the media.

22. Data relating to the involvement of major groups in partnerships, when disaggregated by individual major group, show that 30 per cent of partnerships have non-governmental organization partners, 38 per cent have business and industry partners, 18 per cent have partners from the scientific and technological community and 9 per cent have partners from local authorities. A much smaller percentage of registered partnerships have partners from women's groups (1 per cent), youth groups (1 per cent), workers' and trade union groups (1 per cent), indigenous people's organizations (1 per cent) and farmers' groups (1 per cent).

23. In all, 481 lead partner organizations are listed for the 334 registered partnerships. Clearly, some partnerships have more than one lead partner organization. Of the lead partners, 33 per cent are major group organizations, 24 per cent are Government partners, 19 per cent are United Nations system organizations, and 14 per cent are other intergovernmental organizations. Academic institutions and foundations, as well as the media, account for 8 per cent of all lead partners.

Figure VII
Partners per partnership



⁵ The nine major groups of civil society identified in Agenda 21 are: women, youth and children, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and Trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological community and Farmers.

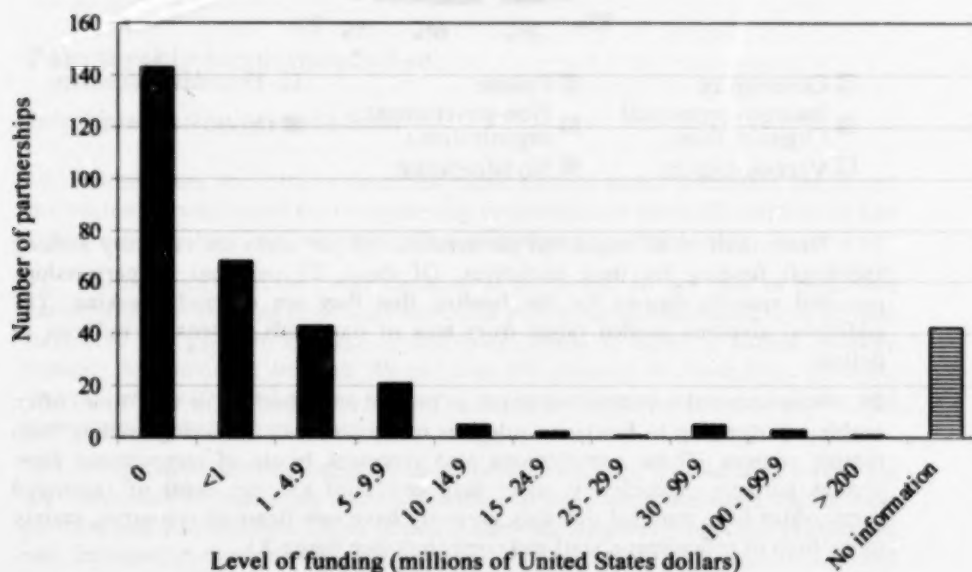
24. The number of partner organizations per partnership tends to vary (see figure VII). In registered partnerships, the number of confirmed partners ranged from 2 to as many as 232. However, a significant majority of partnerships (66 per cent) have 20 partners or fewer.

25. In general, partner organizations involved in the development of a partnership from the early stages ensure that the approach taken is genuinely participatory and reflective of the needs of the various stakeholders.

F. Resources

26. The resource base of a partnership, whether supported by financial resources or non-financial contributions, is one of the key determinants affecting a partnership's ability to carry out its activities. A significant number of registered partnerships (87 per cent) have provided information on resources available to them (see figure VIII).

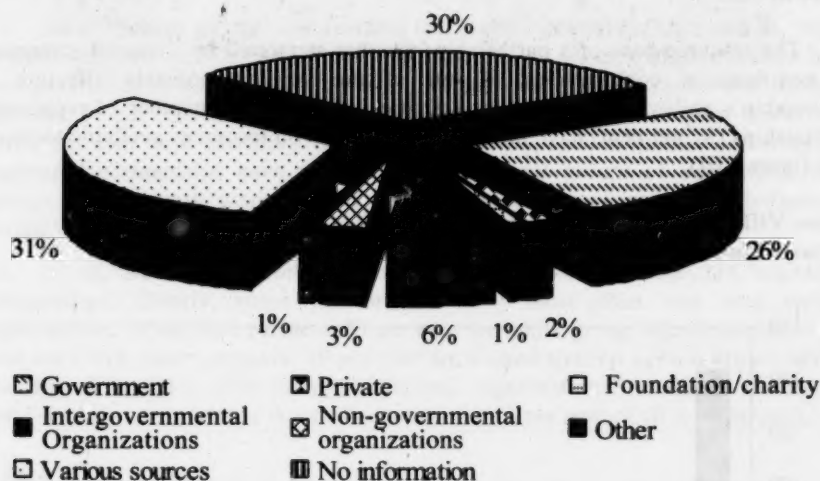
Figure VIII
Reported funding levels in partnerships



27. Based on the information reported, 44 per cent of registered partnerships (148) have secured financial resources, while 36 per cent (120) are supported by non-financial (in kind) contributions. A total of 292 (87 per cent) have provided information on the source of funding. It should be noted that many partnerships with secured funding have multiple donors. Of the 334 registered partnerships, 71 per cent have identified their donor type, with 26 per cent reporting receiving funding from Governments, 6 per cent receiving funding from intergovernmental

organizations (including United Nations system organizations), and 2 per cent receiving funding from private sector donors exclusively. One third of partnerships (32 per cent) are also recipients of funding from more than one source, including private sector resources. In addition, 3 per cent of partnerships have reported receiving grants from non-governmental organizations, while 1 per cent are receiving funding from other sources, such as foundations (see figure IX).

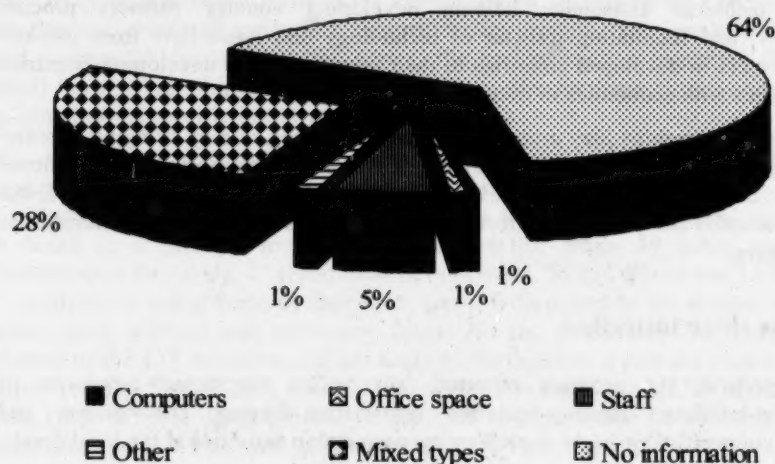
Figure IX
Types of funding



28. Nearly half of all registered partnerships (49 per cent) are currently seeking additional funding for their initiatives. Of these, 27 per cent of partnerships provided specific figures for the funding that they are currently seeking. The additional amounts needed range from tens of thousands to tens of millions of dollars.

29. Non-financial contributions (such as in-kind contributions or staff time) often enable a partnership to function while it is in the process of securing funding from outside sources. These contributions also represent levels of commitment from various partners. Specifically, more than one third (36 per cent) of registered partnerships have reported that they currently have non-financial resources, mainly in the form of office space, staff and computers (see figure X).

Figure X
Types of non-financial resources



III. Partnership implementation

A. Implementation mechanisms

30. Partnerships for sustainable development address global economic, social and environmental challenges by strengthening cooperation in areas of institutional and human capacity-building, research, information-sharing and technology transfer.

31. Partnerships work to foster capacity at all levels: 80 per cent of registered partnerships are working to educate and build awareness of sustainable development issues; 69 per cent are engaged in activities related to building human resource capacity by providing training; 49 per cent are engaged in some form of direct technology transfer; and 47 per cent carry out activities that focus on building and strengthening institutional capacity.

32. Partnerships actively engaging in advocacy, education and building awareness are committed to improving communication and knowledge exchange among their partners and stakeholders. These initiatives are utilizing web-based communication and information-dissemination platforms to collaborate on data collection, select indicator methodologies, report on best practices and propose models and tools for managing technologies and natural resources. The use of online tools enables communities geographically spread across the globe to collaborate and maintain information on common web spaces, take advantage of collective global expertise, identify cooperative research agendas and apply the relevant information to their local needs.

33. Most partnerships conduct national-level workshops and training sessions, which enable country-specific needs assessment to take place. Based on those assessments, partners are able to identify the political, technical, structural,

regulatory and financing barriers that need to be overcome in order to address specific sustainable development issues.

34. Technology transfer by registered partnerships mostly takes the form of targeted technical assistance; helping developing country partners procure technology; and facilitating transfer of technology and know-how from private-sector partners in developed countries to their counterparts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

35. Many partnerships play a convening and facilitating role by bringing together and engaging key leaders and stakeholders in national legislation and international processes. Some partnerships are building institutional capacity by helping to foster new partnerships and providing information on project and funding opportunities to their partners.

B. Progress since initiation

36. In general, the progress reported falls within the broad categories of partnership-building; capacity-building; information-sharing; publications; and technical cooperation projects implementing partnership activities at the local level.

37. Partnership progress included reports of successful fund-raising; confirmation of additional partners; the development of organizational principles to define the terms of collaboration and cooperation among partners (including memorandums of understanding); and the development of an internal governance and coordination mechanism through the formation of steering committees and partnership secretariats. The identification of regional and national focal points as part of a partnership's coordination structure was also reported. In addition to coordination activities within partnerships, many partnerships have continued to develop formal collaborative arrangements with other partnerships active in similar complementary focal areas.

38. Capacity-building activities reported included the organization of conferences, workshops, symposiums and training sessions and the formation of expert networks.

39. The information-sharing activities most frequently mentioned included the establishment of partnership websites and newsletters, the publication of case studies, directories, educational and training materials and policy papers and the creation of toolkits. The creation of web portals/clearing-house mechanisms providing access to online tools, databases and software is another trend in partnership information-dissemination activities.

40. While most partnerships continue to work to create and maintain an effective organizational structure and focus on partnership and stakeholder relationship-building, these efforts appear to be taking place in parallel to on-the-ground implementation activities, pilot projects and research studies at the regional and country levels.

IV. Agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa

41. In keeping with the focus of the current review session of the Commission on the thematic cluster of agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development, and sustainable development for Africa, the present section examines in greater detail those partnerships whose primary focus is this thematic cluster and includes information on specific initiatives (see boxes I-IX).

42. Of the 334 registered partnerships, 95 initiatives have a primary focus on agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa, with some listing more than one primary area. Agriculture is listed as a primary focus by 40 partnerships, while 49 listed sustainable development for Africa, 27 listed rural development, 26 listed land and 12 indicated desertification and drought as their focal areas. With regard to the sectoral coverage totals (both primary and secondary focus) for the partnerships in this thematic cluster, of the 173 initiatives, 28 per cent (95) have either a primary or a secondary focus on agriculture, 27 per cent (90) on sustainable development for Africa, 23 per cent (78) on rural development, 19 per cent (64) on land, 10 per cent (35) on desertification and 9 per cent (29) on drought.

Box I

Competence Platform on Energy Crop and Agroforestry Systems for Arid and Semi-arid Ecosystems — Africa

The Competence Platform on Energy Crop and Agroforestry Systems for Arid and Semi-arid Ecosystems — Africa (COMPETE) aims to stimulate bioenergy implementation in Africa by establishing a platform for policy dialogue and capacity-building in the major multilateral and bilateral funding organizations and key stakeholders throughout the bioenergy provision and supply chains. Biomass energy produced on a sustainable basis provides opportunities to contribute to the fight against poverty, hunger, ill health, illiteracy and the continuing deterioration of ecosystems worldwide, especially in Africa. Since the start of the project in 2007, studies on current and improved land use have been under way for several African countries focusing on the sustainable provision of bioenergy. A seminar was held in São Paulo and Riberão Preto, Brazil, in October 2007 which included practical information exchanges (field trips), mainly for participants from Africa. COMPETE is currently engaged in overview studies on national and regional policies and strategies for sub-Saharan Africa in the field of energy crops, agroforestry systems and biofuels.

A. Trends

43. Given the degree of overlap among partnerships within this subset (see para. 42 above), the following general statistics are presented on an aggregated basis for all 173 registered partnerships active in the thematic cluster.

44. In terms of geographical coverage, 28 per cent of agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa partnerships are global, 9 per cent are regional, 10 per cent are subregional and 3 per cent are national.

45. In terms of time frame, 10 per cent of the partnerships within the thematic cluster for the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions were initiated prior to 2002, while 41 per cent were initiated in 2002, 29 per cent in 2003, 12 per cent in 2004, 3 per cent in 2005, 2 per cent in 2006 and 3 per cent in 2007. In terms of duration, 33 per cent are open-ended, while the remainder ranges from 3 to 16 years in length.

Box II

West Africa Water Initiative

The West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) aims to address critical human health needs, poverty alleviation and sustainable development through better management of water resources. Its work is currently focused on rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana, Mali and the Nigeria in support of projects to improve the health and well-being of populations in those West African countries. Achievements include: approximately 1,131 wells drilled and close to 100 old systems rehabilitated, benefiting more than 500,000 people; more than 25,000 latrines constructed to enhance community and school sanitation; and 22 small water supply systems constructed and 131 school health and sanitation clubs established (the Niger).

In terms of lead partner involvement, 11 per cent of agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa partnerships benefit from Government input, 16 per cent from major groups participation and 8 per cent from United Nations system involvement, while 4 per cent involve other intergovernmental organizations and 5 per cent include other organizations, such as academic institutions. The remaining partnerships (129) are led by more than one partner. The number of partners within a partnership ranges from 2 to 251, with the majority of partnerships (89 per cent) having fewer than 50 partners. Of the 173 partnerships that list agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa as their primary and/or secondary focus, 82 per cent are composed of Governments, 82 per cent of major groups organizations, 58 per cent of organizations or agencies of the United Nations system, 57 per cent of other intergovernmental organizations and 50 per cent of academic organizations and foundations.

Box III**Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative: People Shaping their Sustainable Futures**

The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative is a multi-stakeholder umbrella framework that engages civil society, Governments and intergovernmental organizations with a view to achieving concrete and measurable improvements in the livelihoods and living conditions of the rural poor and the sustainability of their environments. The Initiative is facilitated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations but led by civil society. Since its launch in 2002, the Initiative has aimed, inter alia, to improve access by the poor to critical resources for sustainable agriculture and rural development; and agro-ecological and ecosystem approaches; to ensure fairer and more decent conditions of employment in agriculture; and to encourage new ventures and strategic alliances to promote sustainable rural livelihoods and sustainable farming systems.

In terms of resources, 58 per cent of partnerships within the thematic cluster for the 16th and 17th sessions have already secured funding. In terms of future resources, 35 per cent of the partnerships in this thematic cluster are seeking additional funding. Nearly half (47 per cent) of the partnerships are currently utilizing non-financial resources. The breakdown of funding sources is as follows: 27 per cent of current funding is from Governments, 6 per cent from intergovernmental organizations, 2 per cent from private sector sources, 1 per cent from foundations, 4 per cent from non-governmental organizations and 1 per cent from other sources.

Box IV**Global Bioenergy Partnership**

The Global Bioenergy Partnership aims to provide a mechanism for partners to organize, coordinate and implement targeted international research, development, demonstration and commercial activities related to the production, delivery, conversion and use of biomass for energy, with a particular focus on developing countries. Its initial targets included raising awareness and facilitating information exchange on bioenergy; studies and projects in bioenergy and trade, as well as bioenergy and sustainability; and methodologies for measuring greenhouse gas emission reductions resulting from the use of bioenergy.

B. Implementation focus and implementation mechanisms

46. The partnerships working in the areas of agriculture, desertification, drought, land, rural development and sustainable development for Africa are similar to the larger group of registered partnerships in that most of them include capacity-building activities in their implementation mechanisms. The majority (52 per cent)

include in their workplans an educational component aimed at raising awareness; 31 per cent are engaged in some form of technology transfer; 40 per cent provide training services to build human resources; and 29 per cent are working to strengthen institutional capacity.

Box V

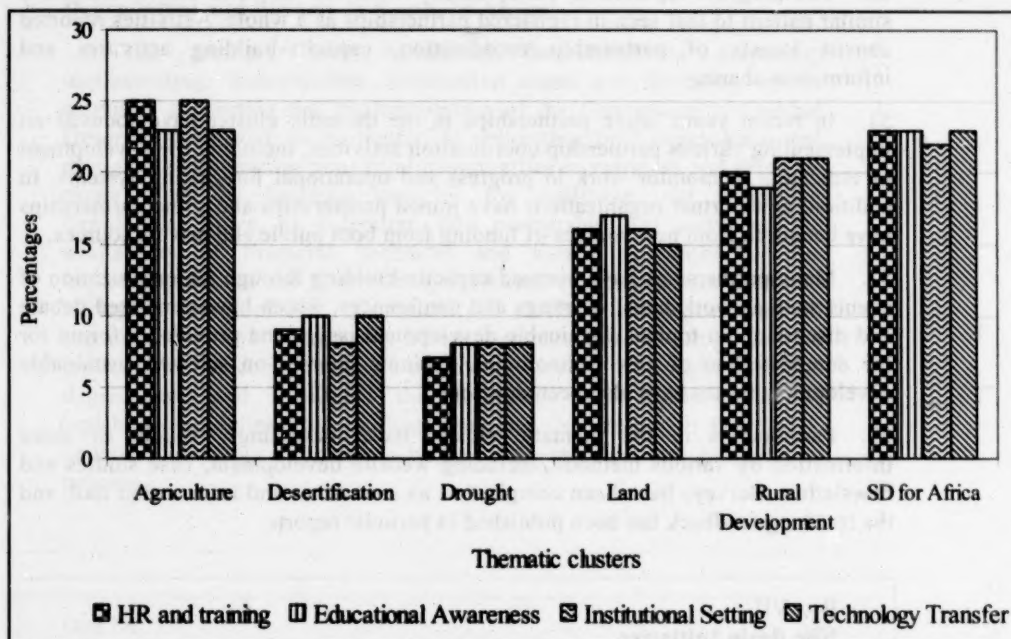
Education for Rural People

Education for Rural People seeks to build awareness about the importance of education for rural people as a crucial step towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and achieving universal primary education, gender equity and sustainable natural resources management. Since its launch in 2002, 307 partners have joined the initiative; five regional workshops were held on the theme of education for rural people; national strategies for education for rural people were formulated in Kosovo (Serbia) and South Africa; and a network on education and training for rural people was created with the participation of France. ERP has successfully promoted the alliance among the education and the agriculture and rural development sectors opening the door for revisiting the links between education and rural development at the public policymakers level and rethinking the constraints inherited from the traditional sectoral division of labour between ministries of education and agriculture.

47. A breakdown of the statistics indicates that approximately one quarter of the partnerships focusing on agriculture, rural development and sustainable development for Africa have implemented all four mechanisms, namely, educational awareness; institutional setting; technology transfer; and human resources and training.

48. In contrast, of the partnerships focusing on desertification and drought, less than one tenth of all partnerships have implemented all four mechanisms. On average, 16 per cent of partnerships focusing on land issues have implemented all four mechanisms (see figure XI).

Figure XI
Implementation mechanisms of partnerships: thematic cluster focus



49. Partnerships active in the thematic cluster are working to create global policy networks that promote dialogue and knowledge-sharing through the establishment of collaborative activities with organizations at the local, national, regional and global levels. These initiatives are working to build capacity and share information on issues as diverse as water management and conservation and tenure rights and land arrangements.

Box VI
Land Alliances for National Development

Land Alliances for National Development (LAND) Partnerships is a global initiative seeking to strengthen country-level collaboration among State institutions, civil society, international agencies and other key stakeholders to increase the secure access of the rural poor to natural resources, especially land, and enable them to participate directly in policy- and decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods. Since its launch in 2002, the partnership has been actively promoting LAND in the 35-plus countries where it has programmes. Initial pilot countries included Guatemala, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Africa. Participation by stakeholders in developing a common vision and framework forms the main foundation for the partnership.

C. Progress since initiation

50. The progress reported in partnerships within the thematic cluster follows a similar pattern to that seen in registered partnerships as a whole. Activities reported consist largely of partnership coordination, capacity-building activities and information-sharing.

51. In recent years, some partnerships in the thematic cluster have focused on implementing various partnership coordination activities, including the development of indicators to monitor work in progress and operational forecasting systems. In addition, new partner organizations have joined partnerships and some partnerships have benefited from new sources of funding from both public and private sources.

52. Many partnerships have pursued capacity-building through the organization of events such as workshops, meetings and conferences, which have generated debate and discussion on topical sustainable development issues and provided a forum for the demonstration of new technologies. Training courses on selected sustainable development issues have also been developed.

53. Partnerships in the thematic cluster have increasingly sought to share information by various methods, including website development, case studies and newsletters. Surveys have been compiled as an evaluation and information tool, and the resulting feedback has been published in periodic reports.

Box VII **Nile Basin Initiative**

Launched by the Council of Ministers of Water Affairs of the Nile Basin States (sometimes referred to as the Nile Council of Ministers), the Initiative includes all Nile countries and seeks to sustainably develop the river in a cooperative manner, share substantial socio-economic benefits, develop an efficient water management system and promote regional peace and security. The arrangement now comprises an institutional framework, an agreement on the sharing of resources, a comprehensive development programme of Nile resources for the benefit of all and clear mechanisms on funding and partnership. A strategic action programme is now in place aimed at ensuring the equitable utilization of and benefit from the common Nile basin water resources.

Box VIII**Strategic Partnership for Mobilizing Civil Society to Combat Land Degradation and Poverty in Southern Africa**

The partners have committed themselves to preparing, implementing, disseminating information about and following up on activities supporting the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, and, in particular, to combating land degradation and drought and enhancing poor rural communities in marginal and drought-prone areas by building capacity for resilience and improving livelihoods. Since its inception, this partnership has increased the availability of financial, technical and human resources for the implementation of the Convention; increased capacity within Southern African Development Community (SADC) non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations to improve the participation of communities in decisions relevant to drought and land degradation; and facilitated the production and dissemination of legislative guidelines for implementing the Convention in the SADC countries, developed through a participatory research and consultation process.

Box IX**Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research Challenge Programme: Biofortified Crops for Improved Human Nutrition**

The Biofortification Challenge Programme seeks to bring the full potential of agricultural and nutrition science and research to bear on the persistent problem of micronutrient malnutrition by breeding staple food crops that are rich in micronutrients, a process referred to as "biofortification". Micronutrient malnutrition, primarily the result of diets poor in bioavailable vitamins and minerals, affects more than half of the world's population, especially women and preschool children. The costs of these deficiencies in terms of lives lost, forgone economic growth and poor quality of life are staggering. To reach the Millennium Development Goal target of halving the proportion of undernourished people by 2015, new technologies and approaches are needed. The Programme focuses on three micronutrients that are widely recognized by the World Health Organization as limiting: iron, zinc, and vitamin A (beta-carotene). Full-time breeding programmes are proposed for six staple foods for which feasibility studies have already been completed and which are consumed by the majority of the world's poor in Africa, Asia and Latin America: rice, wheat, maize, cassava, sweet potatoes and common beans. Pre-breeding feasibility studies are proposed for 11 additional staples: bananas, barley, cowpeas, groundnuts, lentils, millet, pigeon peas, plantains, potatoes, sorghum and yams.

V. Partnership-related activities of the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development

54. The Commission secretariat gathers, promotes and disseminates information on registered partnerships that are implementing sustainable development around the world, facilitates discussions and offers opportunities for contributions to be showcased at the Commission's regular sessions. It bases its activities on the mandate of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the decision on partnerships taken at the eleventh session of the Commission, as well as on further guidance from the Commission.

55. The secretariat has been requested to make partnerships information, including voluntary reports, available to the widest audience possible through electronic and print media and activities such as the Commission's partnership fairs. The secretariat is also expected to produce summary reports, which contain synthesized information based on partnership submissions for consideration by the Commission, in accordance with its programme and organization of work.

56. Partnerships are encouraged, under the criteria and guidelines established at the eleventh session of the Commission, to exchange information with Governments and other stakeholders. As the guidelines promote transparency and accountability, each registered partnership is encouraged to report on its progress and activities biennially, and this information should be publicly announced. Reporting should be comprehensive and provide new information on all aspects of the partnership as well as focus on how partnerships have contributed to the implementation of internationally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments.

A. Online resources: partnerships website and database

57. In February 2004, the Commission secretariat launched the Commission on Sustainable Development Partnerships for Sustainable Development website and database. The interactive website is a valuable resource for sharing and gathering information on partnership-related activities and provides access to a wide array of tools and applications designed to promote knowledge-sharing and networking.

58. The partnerships website was further redesigned in March 2006 and February 2007 to add more relevant content, increase user-friendliness, improve navigation and enable easier access to partnership-related information resources. This online resource is aimed at assisting and facilitating the identification of partnership activities and contributions to implementation by making available a wide selection of practical information, including details about how to register new partnerships with the Commission secretariat, information on forthcoming partnership-related meetings and recent publications on registered partnerships and detailed guidelines and the programme of activities of Commission partnership fairs.⁶ An online discussion forum has been created where members of registered partnerships can exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices. All publications on registered partnerships produced by the secretariat are freely available to download at the partnerships website.

⁶ These documents and several other online summary publications are available at the partnerships website, <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>.

59. Information on the partnerships database is based solely on registered partnerships' voluntary self-reports from partnership focal points. Requests for updates are sent out annually; however, obtaining current information remains a challenge. Lead partners are urged to keep their information up to date in order for the database to remain relevant.

60. To date, the most frequently accessed section of the partnerships website has been the Partnerships for Sustainable Development database. Since its launch four years ago, the database has had a total of 259,162 visits. The number of visits has doubled every year since 2004, reaching 112,877 in 2007 alone.

61. The secretariat is working to build an online knowledge network on partnerships for sustainable development. It is hoped that the development of online tools that facilitate communication channels and information flow as well as promote learning and collaboration between registered partnerships will, in time, lead to the creation of online communities of practice among registered partnerships.

B. Networking opportunities: partnership fairs

62. In addition to using online resources, registered partnerships can present information on their activities at the annual partnership fairs and other partnership-related events organized by the Commission secretariat. These information-sharing activities help raise awareness and could lead to expansion in the form of new partners or the replication of successful initiatives.

63. The partnership fairs provide an opportunity for registered partnerships to showcase progress, network with existing and potential partners, create synergies between partnerships, share lessons learned and best practices and exchange experiences with a view to finding solutions to challenges such as mobilizing resources or partner retention. They provide a unique opportunity for partnerships to advertise and promote their efforts and activities to an intergovernmental forum.

64. Partnership fairs also provide Commission participants with an opportunity to gather information on, and discuss directly with partnership practitioners, the important contribution of the initiatives in providing support for the implementation of sustainable development. These sessions have greatly benefited from the participation of different stakeholders, including Government officials and representatives of national, regional and financial institutions, as well as civil society organizations, scientists and other experts, consumers and representatives of the private sector.

65. The sixteenth session partnership fair will take place from 5 to 16 May 2008 at Headquarters. Activities will include interactive discussion sessions on the theme of partnerships in practice; partnership presentations in which registered partnerships will update the Commission on progress made; and information desks where registered partnerships can display and distribute information.

66. To date, the partnership fair has been heralded as a useful and valuable session event, as is evidenced by the fact that 207 partnerships participated in partnership fair activities between 2004 and 2007 and by the interest it has generated among stakeholders over the years.

C. Publications

67. Key to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development secretariat partnerships team is the publication of reports providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on trends in implementing sustainable development through partnerships. In addition to publishing the reports of the Secretary-General on partnerships for sustainable development, the secretariat partnership team also publishes *Partnerships Wire*, a newsletter highlighting discussions during the partnership fair sessions, and background papers on partnerships, which are distributed widely and freely through the partnerships website.

68. Additional activities, such as workshops, seminars, expert group meetings and brokering initiatives, are being considered to offer further avenues for networking and enhanced stakeholder participation and to promote further the use of the partnership model.

69. The dissemination and sharing of information on partnership lessons learned, best practices and new ideas presents a unique opportunity for the membership of the Commission on Sustainable Development, partnerships and partnership practitioners to identify and address problems, gaps and constraints related to the implementation of sustainable development. This process also supports efforts to take stock and track the progress of ongoing partnerships, which is a key step in demonstrating the value and viability of the partnership model of implementation.

70. The Commission secretariat will continue to promote the valuable lessons learned from implementing sustainable development through partnerships. The sharing and dissemination of information on partnerships enables the Commission and the various stakeholders to ascertain what is and what is not working, find gaps, determine where initiatives can collaborate and where new initiatives are needed and identify underserved areas and niches. It also promotes a greater understanding of the usefulness of partnerships as an implementation tool towards realizing internationally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments, as well as encouraging opportunities for scaling up and replicability.

VI. Conclusion

71. The World Summit on Sustainable Development represented a major departure from previous United Nations conferences in many ways, particularly in terms of structure and outcomes. For the first time, negotiated outcome documents were complemented by the launch of more than 200 voluntary partnerships, providing an important mechanism to facilitate implementation.

72. In the years since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, partnerships for sustainable development launched at the Summit have continued to develop, grow and be consolidated. They have proved to be a useful and credible vehicle to effect change by catalysing Government action, engaging a wide range of stakeholders and creating new, innovative models for the implementation of sustainable development goals and commitments. At the same time, the initiatives are evolving by taking on new partners and building alliances with other partnerships working in complementary areas.

73. New partnerships have continued to be launched and registered with the Commission secretariat. By collaborating across all levels, pooling skills and resources and developing innovative policies and technical and financing solutions to overcome barriers to sustainable development, Commission partnerships continue to have an impact and make concrete contributions to the implementation of internationally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments.

74. Most important, partnerships continue to deliver results on the ground. They have contributed to improving the quality of implementation by involving those relevant stakeholders — Governments, civil society and the private sector — whose activities have a direct impact on sustainable development. The need to actively engage those actors in promoting and implementing sustainable development has become more pressing in view of the challenges resulting from an increasingly interdependent global world, thus making partnerships a useful vehicle to catalyse actions, resources and expertise that Governments and other stakeholders alone may not be able to assemble as efficiently and effectively.

75. Five years after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, there appears to be a growing acceptance that partnerships are now embedded in the international sustainable development dialogue and have become an integral part of the work of the United Nations system. Although partnering in the field of sustainable development is a relatively new approach to implementation, it is no longer a theoretical concept. As a dynamic implementation mechanism which has enriched the Commission's work, partnerships have become an important resource for relevant stakeholders, enabling them to get involved in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and for Commission participants, who appreciate the significant contribution of the initiatives.

76. At the same time, there is increasing recognition that the international community may be entering a new phase of dialogue which requires further efforts to advance and mainstream the partnership-based approach to development. There is a growing interest in building on the concrete added value that voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives bring to the implementation of sustainable development goals, as well as in increasing efforts to further scale up and replicate partnership contributions and best practices. Concerns have also been raised about the need for partnerships to demonstrate greater effectiveness with a view to attracting new, additional and better-directed financial resources.

77. Expectations have also increased from a growing number of partnership stakeholders on the need for holding, in a timely manner, a third international forum on partnerships for sustainable development, which would provide an opportunity to take stock and address challenges and opportunities relating to the use of partnerships, further facilitate knowledge-sharing on experiences, lessons learned and best practices and discuss emerging possibilities.

78. Some important lessons have been learned by the use of partnerships since Johannesburg, as the following few examples can attest:

(a) *Increased recognition of the contribution of local actors.* More than half (51 per cent) of registered partnerships are global in scope, while the remainder are regional (20 per cent), subregional (23 per cent), national (5 per cent) or local (1 per cent) in scope. However, most partnerships, including those with global and regional scope, engage in activities at the national and local levels and hence have helped to

increase the participation of local communities. A partnership's effectiveness, impact and contribution is tested on the ground. Local intermediaries and implementers are essential for the success and sustainability of partnerships;

(b) *Increased effectiveness in development cooperation frameworks and enhancement of national sustainable development efforts.* A number of Government partners have utilized partnerships as an innovative approach to increasing effectiveness in their development cooperation frameworks. The partnership model has also been used to enhance national sustainable development strategies and policies and as a tool to harness relevant resources for their implementation. The effective use of partnerships could offer other developed and developing countries a more participatory approach, increased ownership and leadership, solidarity and mutual accountability in the design, implementation and evaluation of appropriate development initiatives and international cooperation frameworks;

(c) *Support for corporate social responsibility efforts.* Partnerships have served as useful tools for the promotion and facilitation of corporate social responsibility efforts by the private sector partners involved in these initiatives, which account for 38 per cent of the partners involved. Most of the registered partnerships with significant private sector partner involvement have identified, inter alia, increased visibility and credibility, knowledge exchange, environmental responsibility and further global impact as prime incentives for establishing their partnerships and registering with the Commission secretariat. These initiatives have experienced the value of applying sustainable development as a unifying concept and a guiding principle in their partnering efforts. Additionally, these partnerships have provided a platform for some companies to work together with other companies that would otherwise be their competitors;

(d) *Governments must continue to play an important role in fostering partnerships.* The complexity of the development challenges facing countries nowadays will continue to test the ability of Governments to muster the necessary resources and capacities to confront them. New types of cooperation and collective action across the traditional boundaries of public, private and civil society sectors are essential, since resources are usually scarce and dispersed among different sectors and actors. Thus, when used effectively, partnerships offer a viable, valuable and powerful development tool to support development objectives. Governments must continue to play an important role in the promotion and development of partnerships, allowing other stakeholders, such as business and civil society, to offer their expertise and contribute to delivering more effective development solutions.

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**Review of progress in implementing the decision of the
thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable
Development on water and sanitation**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In line with the decisions of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, countries have implemented wide-ranging policies to enhance access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, as well as to promote the adoption of the integrated water resources management framework. Results have been mixed. The world may meet the Millennium Development Goals target on safe drinking water but current trends do not support meeting the sanitation target. Many countries have included water and sanitation actions in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers — in some cases more prominently than others. Much more needs to be done for systematic scaling up of infrastructure, rehabilitation of deteriorated water supply systems, capacity-building, ensuring adequate financial support and strengthening capacities of the public utilities.

Countries are implementing water management measures that are important in their own national contexts. Not only do these efforts need to be sustained, but countries need to be better informed as to how integrated water resources management can help them achieve broader development goals. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms for integrated water resources management and provision of

* E/CN.17/2008/1.



service is vital for rational decision-making with regard to future investments in the water and sanitation sector. Finally, meeting water and sanitation goals requires that the Governments, the private sector and civil society must raise the priority attached to them in their development plans.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report reviews the progress made in implementing decisions on water and sanitation adopted at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The decisions were based on two major priorities of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation: access to water and sanitation services, and the preparation of national integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans. While recommending various policy options and practical measures for expediting implementation, the Commission stressed the need for increased investments in water and sanitation, recognizing that provision of sustained water and sanitation services contributes to sustainable development, including economic growth, improved health and reduced poverty. Agreed policies and measures and some best practice examples discussed at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development can be found in the Report on the Thirteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (11-22 April 2005),¹ and the User-Friendly Matrix of the Chair's Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting Summary.²

2. Information for this report has been drawn from various sources including the:

(a) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);

(b) United Nations World Water Development Report, published by UN-Water;

(c) Human Development Report (2006);

(d) National Progress Reports on Millennium Development Goals;

(e) Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;

(f) country responses to the integrated water resources management questionnaire developed the UN-Water Task Force on integrated water resources management; and

(g) reports from major groups.

II. Review of progress

3. Progress reported has been grouped under four thematic areas: access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; integrated water resources management; water sector monitoring; and financing for water and sanitation services. Examples cited are programmes and projects that have been implemented in areas such as capacity-building, technology transfer, partnerships, strengthening of public water utilities, and decentralization of water services and governance. Case studies demonstrating why some policy options have been more effective than others are noted. The main issues and obstacles to the implementation of agreed decisions are evaluated and some solutions to overcome these constraints are identified.

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 9 (E/2005/29).*

² <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/matrix.pdf>.

4. This report also provides a preliminary analysis of the state of preparation and implementation of integrated water resources management plans. It reports on the range of institutional and regulatory measures and programmes countries are implementing to improve water governance, ensure efficient water allocation among different uses, enhance the sustainability of ecosystems and raise awareness of the importance of efficient water use and conservation. It also presents a succinct overview of various actions undertaken to enhance monitoring of both water resources and water services, as well as of financial flows to the sector, and the challenges involved.

A. Access to water and sanitation services

5. The current trends with regard to gaining access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation present a mixed picture, but one that shows signs of improvement. Tables 1 and 2 show that, in order to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets, over 80 million people per year need to gain access to water and over 120 million people per year need to gain access to sanitation over the period 2005-2015.

6. In the light of progress made by some large countries in Asia, such as China, India and Pakistan, the world in general seems on track with regard to halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water. In the case of sanitation, however, trends are less promising. Among the regions, sub-Saharan Africa is lagging far behind on the targets, and would need to double the number of people gaining access to safe drinking water each year and quadruple the number currently gaining access to sanitation to meet internationally agreed targets. This will require substantial financial support by external partners as well as strong political commitment by Governments to infrastructure development and rehabilitation.

7. Countries have made progress in reflecting water and sanitation in their national development strategies, but much remains to be done before national policies and legislation on water and sanitation can be said to reflect international goals and objectives. Programmes to promote water and sanitation infrastructure in rural areas are, unfortunately, still being driven by top-down, technology and target imperatives, rather than by bottom-up measures which are inclusive of those who most need it.

8. Despite the level of current efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals, this target represents only a minimal goal to achieve universal access. Even if these targets are met, there will still be some 900 million people lacking access to safe drinking water and 1.3 billion lacking access to improved sanitation in 2015. Within this somewhat gloomy aggregate picture, however, there are some bright spots and many examples of good practices that implement the recommendations of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. These are highlighted in the subsequent sections.

1. Access to safe drinking water

9. Available data show that the countries of South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific are on track or nearly on track for meeting water supply targets, while West Asian States and sub-Saharan Africa are lagging behind (table 1). In 1990-2004, countries in sub-Saharan Africa increased coverage

rates for safe drinking water by an average of 10.5 million people per year. To meet the 2015 targets, taking into account population growth rates, the region would have to more than double this level to 23 million per year over the next decade. Thus, efforts in sub-Saharan Africa need to focus on a systematic scaling up of infrastructure, rehabilitation of deteriorated water systems, capacity-building and financial support. Equally important is a strong political commitment demonstrated through increased allocation of resources in national budgets.

10. Some of the world's most populous developing countries, including Brazil, Egypt, India, Mexico, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey and Viet Nam, have managed to exceed their targets for providing access to safe drinking water, and are well on their way to achieving universal access by 2015.³ China, with its huge population, has more than kept pace with population growth, and has made particular progress with house connections in rural areas. Smaller countries (under 30 million people) which have also registered good progress include Afghanistan, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Guatemala, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, Nepal, Paraguay and the Syrian Arab Republic.⁴ Rural-urban disparities continue to persist, but evidence shows that countries that have concentrated on both rural and urban areas have registered significant progress in the provision of water services.

Table 1
Safe drinking water: past performance and future targets

Region	People with access to improved water source (millions)			Average annual number of people (millions)	
	1990	2004	Target 2015	Gaining access 1990-2004	Needing access to meet target, 2004-2015
Sub-Saharan Africa	226.6	383.8	627.1	10.5	23.1
Arab States	180.1	231.8	335.8	4.7	6.5
East Asia and Pacific	1 154.4	1 528.2	1 741.2	22.9	24.3
South Asia	840.6	1 296.4	1 538.1	32.5	22.1
Latin America and Caribbean	334.3	499.0	527.8	9.0	6.1
World	2 767.7	4 266.4	5 029.5	79.5	82.4

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, United Kingdom, 2006, p. 56 (based on JMP figures).

11. Many countries have prioritized provision of water and sanitation services in their national development plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In some cases, however, the prioritization is more evident than others in terms of resource allocations from national budgets. Some examples of countries that have allocated a significant budget for water projects in their national development plans include Bangladesh, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Uganda and Viet Nam. This commitment enabled some of these countries to secure additional sources from

³ WHO and UNICEF, Joint Monitoring Programme Report, p. 8, 2006.

⁴ The countries listed have improved access to water supply by at least 4 percentage points during the period 2000-2004. Country data at www.wssinfo.org.

external development partners. Several countries that are classified as heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and the Niger, have allocated HIPC funds for water supply and other hydraulic projects. However, public spending on water and sanitation typically represents less than 0.5 per cent of a country's gross domestic product, despite country-led efforts to include water and sanitation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and poverty diagnostics.⁵

12. With regard to the Commission recommendation that countries provide support for water infrastructure planning and development, it has been noted in development plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers that various countries are pursuing different strategies and priorities. Some countries (e.g., Albania, Armenia and Tajikistan) are focusing on rehabilitation of aging infrastructure, in order to improve water quality and water treatment. Similarly, some countries which were having difficulty in improving access, such as Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, noted that aging infrastructure had led to deterioration in the efficiency of water supply systems. Other countries, such as Cambodia, Cape Verde, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger and Senegal, have focused on improving access to drinking water in urban areas by extending the distribution grid through house connections and the installation of standposts. Kenya's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers noted the rehabilitation of rural water supply systems and the provision of pumping and generating sets to small towns for improved water supply. Others, including Burkina Faso and Zambia, are concentrating on construction and rehabilitation of small dams, storage reservoirs and boreholes. Viet Nam supported efforts to improve waterways and irrigation. It is noteworthy that all of these countries were very conscious of the need for improving water infrastructure in their efforts to reduce poverty in urban and rural areas.

13. Countries are adopting a wide range of policy instruments, covering regulations and economic incentives, among others, for improving the sustainability of service provision. For example, Albania, Armenia and Montenegro are reviewing and revising their tariff and subsidy policies for water and sanitation in order to reduce Government subsidies and improve cost recovery through proper metering and tariff collection. At the same time, they are working on improving the technical capacity of staff in the water utilities and ministries. Similarly, economic incentives are provided in Kyrgyzstan for long-term investment in environmental protection, and connecting the community with the ecosystem. Montenegro has introduced market-based principles, including user-pay and polluter-pay principles, supplemented by reforms promoting equitable access to drinking water and protection of water sources.

2. Access to basic sanitation services

14. The situation regarding access to basic sanitation is much worse than for water, with only Latin America and the Caribbean countries on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals target, and East Asia and the Pacific moving close to the targeted yearly access figures. Again, the main challenge is faced by sub-Saharan Africa, which would need to increase the number of people gaining access to sanitation each year by four times the current rate to be on track to meet

⁵ World Bank, Water and Sanitation Programme Africa. Water Supply and Sanitation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: Benchmarking Performance, 2007.

this goal. South Asia also lags behind on sanitation, and would need to increase the current rate of those gaining access by 72 per cent per year to meet the target.

Table 2

Access to basic sanitation: past performance and future targets

Region	People with access to improved sanitation (millions)			Average annual number of people (millions)	
	1990	2004	Target 2015	Gaining access 1990-2004	Needing access to meet target, 2004-2015
Sub-Saharan Africa	148.4	256.5	556.0	7.2	27.9
Arab States	120.6	196.0	267.2	4.9	6.9
East Asia and Pacific	467.0	958.2	1 284.9	32.0	33.6
South Asia	242.9	543.8	1 083.3	24.7	42.5
Latin America and Caribbean	279.6	423.2	492.2	8.6	8.4
World	1 456.9	2 663.9	3 094.0	77.5	120.4

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2006, p. 56.

15. Given the linkages among water, sanitation, hygiene and health, and the positive impact of access to sanitation on poverty reduction, privacy, dignity, security and education, meeting the Millennium Development Goals target would avert 470,000 deaths and result in an extra 320 million productive working days every year.⁶ The lack of safe water and adequate sanitation in regions lagging behind exacts a high economic cost, particularly for the poorest, mostly women.

16. Several countries undertook efforts to implement the Commission recommendation to establish an institutional home for sanitation and prioritize sanitation in national development plans. Senegal has established a Ministry of Prevention, public hygiene and sanitation, and has made it a Government priority to increase rates of sanitation service coverage over the medium and long terms and in rural as well as urban areas. Nigeria developed a National environmental sanitation policy and action plan. Thailand has incorporated a Rural environmental sanitation programme into its national economic and social development plans for the past 40 years, and Bangladesh and other South Asian countries have introduced Total sanitation campaigns at specific locations.

17. Least developed countries with low levels of sanitation coverage, such as Ethiopia, are focusing public spending on providing basic, low-cost sanitation facilities for those currently without access (see box I). In cities, a high-impact low-cost approach promotes education and information on hygiene and sanitation in schools and public gathering places.

⁶ WHO: Health through Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation. http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/mdg1/en/index.html.

Box I**Strategy to achieve universal access to sanitation in Ethiopia⁷**

Ethiopia has initiated a strategy and programme to achieve universal access to improved sanitation and hygiene by 2012. The solid national commitment to sanitation is reflected in the National hygiene and sanitation strategy; the Sanitation protocol; a Memorandum of understanding among the Ministries of Education, Health and Water Resources; the Universal access policy; and a Health extension package. The health service extension programme under the Ministry of Health includes training 30,000 health extension workers (2 per community or administrative unit), along with equipping health points and other measures. Various stakeholders are working together, and access to sanitation services (from a very low base) appears to be taking off. In addition, NGOs and donor organizations are working together to improve water and sanitation in 60 per cent of the primary schools in Ethiopia by the end of 2007.

18. Nepal's development policy calls for each new water supply project to include a sanitation component, and recognizes sanitation and health are integral parts of any water supply project. This is particularly important in a country with a fragile mountain ecosystem. Other countries, including Moldova and Montenegro, are concentrating resources on collection and treatment of wastewater, disposal of liquid wastes and rehabilitation and construction of sewerage systems.

19. Successful high-profile international campaigns that focus on sanitation, such as the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE)⁸ and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH),⁹ have been introduced by United Nations agencies and partners to support national efforts. The "WASH in schools" campaign has resulted in the development of the "Manual on school sanitation and hygiene education".¹⁰ This implements the Commission's recommendation that countries prioritize sanitation investments in schools, and places an emphasis on children and youth, incorporates gender-sensitive hygiene education in school curricula and ensures the separation of sanitation facilities for boys and girls in all schools.

Box II**Evaluation of school sanitation and hygiene education programme**

A six-country SSHE project was carried out during the period 2000-2004 with local partners from Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Viet Nam and Zambia. An assessment of 8 to 64 pilot schools in each country was carried out starting in 2005, comparing them with control schools not in the pilot programme. It was found that water facilities in more than 80 per cent of the pilot schools were still in

⁷ Helen Pankhurst, Ethiopia Water and Sanitation Sector: Progress towards Targets for Water and Sanitation MDGs, DfID, 2007.

⁸ <http://www.2.irc.nl/sshe>.

⁹ The WSSCC has launched its WASH campaign in over 70 countries. www.wsscc.org.

¹⁰ UNICEF and IRC. Water, Environment and Sanitation Technical Guidelines Series, No. 5, 1998.

working order 12 to 18 months after the project had finished. One problem that remained in most schools had to do with the availability and use of soap. The project schools also performed much better than control schools for indicators such as the cleanliness and effective use by children of toilets and urinals. This provided evidence of the effectiveness of a good SSHE programme, and suggests that benefits continue beyond the end of the project period. Annual per child costs of the programme ranged from \$2.40-\$16. The differences in cost had to do with water availability; construction quality and design; whether new or renovated facilities were used; and, to some extent, local management inefficiencies. Costs were generally lower in Asia than in Africa and Latin America.

Source: IRC and UNICEF, School sanitation and hygiene education: results from the assessment of a six-country pilot project, May 2006.

20. Effective national campaigns, such as those carried out in Bangladesh, India, Senegal and South Africa, can be used as models for other countries. The Total sanitation campaign in Bangladesh has been scaled up from a community-based project to a national programme that is achieving rapid increases in access to sanitation. The programme aims to eliminate open defecation and promote good personal hygiene practices, including hand-washing after latrine use, well-managed latrines and water points. The approach recognizes and promotes indigenous knowledge, values and traditions, and explores local skills and technologies. Not only has it been very successful in Bangladesh itself, but similar programmes are being adopted in countries such as Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia.

21. In India and Pakistan, slum dwellers' associations have collaborated to bring sanitation to millions of people. The National slum dwellers' federation in India and the Orangi pilot project in Pakistan, among many other community organizations, have shown the potential of communities to mobilize resources.¹¹

22. Decisions taken at the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on promoting gender-sensitive sanitation and hygiene education programmes, including through public information campaigns such as Water, sanitation and hygiene for all, have resulted in 70 countries, mainly in Africa and Asia, launching national WASH campaigns. The Water supply and sanitation collaborative council recently created a sanitation grants programme to provide financial support for scaling up the provision of sanitation services and hygiene promotion programmes. This programme targets poor populations that lack basic sanitation.¹²

23. Gender inequalities help to explain the low demand for sanitation in many communities. Evidence from Cambodia, Indonesia and Viet Nam indicates that women place a higher value on access to private sanitation facilities than men.¹³ But

¹¹ UNDP, Human Development Report, p. 12, 2006.

¹² WSSCC, Putting People at the Centre, August 2007. Available at www.wsscc.org.

¹³ Nilanjana, Mukherjee, "Achieving Sustained Sanitation for the Poor. Policy and Strategy Lessons from Participatory Assessments in Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam", WSP-East Asia and the Pacific, Jakarta, 2001.

women often have little control over expenditures at the community and household level. Thus, the priority that women attach to sanitation may not be adequately reflected in decision-making at the village level, in local government or at the national level.

24. Provision of sanitation services is often portrayed as a sanitation "ladder", ranging from the most basic pit latrines to improved pit latrines, to pour-flush toilets using water and septic tanks, to conventional sewers. In terms of low-cost options, many countries are pursuing on-site sanitation options, separate programmes for schools and health clinics; public toilets for slum areas; and community-based NGO-supported programmes. In general, household sanitation facilities are most often financed by the household itself, while the installation of sewerage and wastewater treatment systems are normally included in municipal or community budgets. Cost recovery is frequently pursued by combining water and sanitation services in a single bill, but it is achieved only partially.

25. Much of sub-Saharan Africa has low-coverage sewerage networks, with less than 10 per cent of the urban population connected. Also, in middle income countries, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, sewerage coverage in large cities such as Jakarta and Manila is quite low (8 to 10 per cent). In Jakarta and Manila, limited coverage has given rise to a highly developed infrastructure of pit latrines and septic tanks. Though this ensures removal of waste from households, much of it ends up in rivers, causing serious damage to freshwater resources. In many cities of Africa and Asia, pit latrine infrastructure is more developed than the waste treatment and disposal infrastructure, but emptying latrines in densely populated urban areas requires an extensive service infrastructure, including proper disposal facilities.

26. There is some evidence that countries are employing economic incentives to encourage the participation of small-scale sanitation and hygiene service providers. Under the Total Sanitation Campaign in Bangladesh, a small business sector specializing in producing, marketing and maintaining low-cost latrines has arisen. The number of registered small-scale latrine production centres rose from 2,400 in 2000 to over 3,000 by 2005, demonstrating the capacity of small-scale providers to respond to local needs. The cost of latrines has fallen, and NGOs have provided microfinance loans to cover costs. The National policy for water and sanitation established a policy framework for partnerships of small-scale entrepreneurs and community groups making rural sanitation a priority and providing support for marketing and training through local and national Government agencies.¹⁴

27. Reviews of the current state of implementation suggests that, as noted in the case of HIV/AIDS campaigns, progress remains slow until political leaders, civil society, the media and ordinary people start speaking openly about the problem and its consequences. Sending strong and clear messages about the benefits of investing in water and sanitation services can help influence behaviour and mobilize public support for investments to improve the situation.

¹⁴ Kar, Kamal, and Katherine Pasteur. "Subsidy or Self-respect? Community-Led Total Sanitation. An Update on Recent Developments." Working Paper 257. University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK, 2005.

3. Institutional and policy frameworks

28. Inadequate institutions, fragmented responsibilities, lack of appropriate laws and policies and a shortage of funds were cited in national reports as constraints to effective investment in building human capacity and physical infrastructure, as well as improving water governance. Many countries have started to respond to these constraints by instituting policy reforms and developing their own integrated water resources management plans (see sect. B below). Others have responded by improving water governance through strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks, capacity development and innovation. See Box III for examples.

Box III

Policy reforms in water and sanitation sector under Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

Albania has prepared its Water supply and wastewater strategy to tackle problems of intermittent water supply and poor water quality.

Burkina Faso and **Thailand** have created National water councils or committees, which include the heads of relevant ministries, to coordinate and develop water policy and management.

Guyana established Guyana water incorporated to improve water and sanitation services in urban areas, including the treatment of raw water, and to implement a comprehensive rehabilitation and maintenance plan.

Kenya reformed its water sector in 2004-2005. The reform involved handing water supply schemes to communities; rehabilitation and expansion of water supply and sanitation in urban areas; and the creation of a Water services regulatory board, Water services trust fund and Water resources management authority.

Moldova has revised regulations on collection of wastewater because of serious water quality problems.

Nepal's Rural water supply and sanitation national policy and strategy was revised in 2004 to encourage community participation in decision-making, cost recovery of operation and maintenance expenses and to involve women and disadvantaged groups in benefit-sharing as well as in decision-making.

Zambia in 2003 began to implement its Water resources action plan, which followed a review of the sector's legal and institutional framework.

Source: Country Specific National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

29. An important challenge for Governments of developing countries is to strengthen sector governance at the local level, in particular, the inadequate capacities of operators responsible for delivering water and sanitation services.

30. Designing tariffs and subsidies for water has proven to be a challenge almost everywhere, due to conflicting economic objectives, social constraints and incentive

problems linked to the nature of the industry. Evidence shows that water tariffs in developing countries remain far below cost recovery levels, though to varying degrees in different countries. A global survey of water utilities shows that only 39 per cent of utilities were charging tariffs that allowed them to fully recover short-run and long-run costs.¹⁵ Even in countries which are member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), only half of the utilities achieved this target. Among the utilities surveyed in Africa, none recovered even their operating and maintenance costs. China's Rural water supply and sanitation programme is referred to as an example of high payment compliance, with households metered and a strong incentive system, whereby the salaries of the operations staff are tied to monthly bill collection. Payment compliance is high, usually over 90 per cent. When existing tariffs do not cover operating costs, they are raised. Although the focus, and indeed the success, of this approach is overwhelmingly economic, there is some provision for fairness in the pricing structure. For example, households with individual piped water connections pay more than households receiving lower levels of service.

31. In general, consumption subsidies delivered through low tariffs did not benefit the targeted poorest households, while cross-subsidy schemes remained plagued with other problems. However, there are some positive experiences. Indonesia provides energy subsidies for its water supply programme. The EU Water Initiative has proposed a Euro-Mediterranean water and poverty facility for countries on the Mediterranean Sea, providing economic assistance, including subsidies, for securing a minimum amount of safe water per capita in urban areas. Burkina Faso's public water and sanitation utility levies a small sanitation surcharge on water users, with the proceeds financing social marketing of sanitation and construction of improved sanitation facilities in low-income areas, such as in all primary schools in Ouagadougou. Households are eligible to receive financial aid for improved pit latrines and pour-flush latrines, but they must finance 70-80 per cent of the cost of sanitation facilities.¹⁶ These costs are high given the resources of low-income people, so the very poorest households may not be reached.

4. Partnerships for capacity-building and technology transfer

32. About 90 per cent of water utilities in developing countries are publicly managed, but these utilities often lack capacities to expand the provision of sustainable services. To address this challenge, the Hashimoto Action Plan¹⁷ promoted the need for establishing Water Operators Partnerships.

33. The Water Operators Partnerships promotes utility-to-utility partnership, in many cases on a South-South cooperation basis, but includes North-South cooperation to facilitate sharing experiences, technology transfer, information exchange and a low-cost way of filling the capacity gaps. This idea is gaining momentum in various regions; however, some regional partnerships are more advanced than others. Examples of existing partnerships include: the Inter-American Sanitary and Environmental Engineering Association, an association with outreach

¹⁵ Global Water Intelligence, 2004: Quoted in Kmives et al.: *Water, Electricity and the Poor — Who Benefits from Utility Subsidies?*, World Bank, 2005.

¹⁶ *Water and Sanitation Program-Africa. Mobilizing Resources for Sanitation. Field Note Nairobi*, World Bank, 2004.

¹⁷ For details of Hashimoto Action Plan: <http://www.unsgab.org>.

in 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean; the South East Asian Water Utilities Network, which comprises a network of 47 water utilities; Arab Water Utilities Network; and the African Water Association. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is supporting a secretariat to strengthen the capacities of global Water Operators Partnerships mechanisms to facilitate further interaction among regional and subregional Water Operators Partnerships.

34. Such partnerships are seen as a viable alternative to private sector participation in the provision of water and sanitation services. These can take many forms, under various arrangements such as concessions, delegated management (as is the case in South Africa), or urging the private sector to extend networks through output-based schemes, which seem to have been relatively successful in Viet Nam and Paraguay. The privatization of the East zone of Manila shows some possible benefits of private sector participation. In general, the success of privatization is considered to be largely due to successful management, which focused on both business and social and environmental goals. On the other hand, Bolivia has experienced several serious conflicts over water. The Government withdrew some concessions granted earlier and has adopted a new approach that gives priority to human consumption and water uses for agriculture and food security. From 1990-2005, 55 countries (representing 383 projects) introduced some form of private sector participation in the water sector.

35. A recent review¹⁸ of private sector participation experiences noted that private sector participation has not achieved the desired results, and examples of failure and difficulty in the private water sector are increasing. Difficulties include reconciling the diverging interests of the public sector, the private sector and water consumers. Moreover, the private sector is said to be using the same sources of funds as the public sector — loans from donors, aid money and tariff revenue from customers.

36. Capacity-building has continued to receive greater attention in technical assistance programmes. For example, Japan has established a technical training programme for arid and semi-arid countries, including Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Similar assistance is being provided by the Czech Republic to drought-stricken areas of Ethiopia on groundwater resources investigation and development of basic water management tools for use in drought-prone areas. The Southern African Development Community, in its programme for regional integration through cooperation on international rivers, has developed a Regional strategic action plan for water management, 2005-2010. It focuses on water resources development through monitoring and data collection, infrastructure development (water supply schemes for small border towns and villages), capacity-building (to strengthen river basin organizations) and water governance. Each basin has its own projects, involving national committees, a technical committee, river basin organizations and implementing agencies.¹⁹

37. Many countries have reported specific programmes for capacity-building in water and sanitation in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. For example, Guyana, Lesotho, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam have targeted their capacity-building programmes towards improvements in monitoring

¹⁸ United Nations Research Institute in Social Development. Social Policies and Water Sector Reform: Programme Paper 3, September 2007 (by Naren Prasad).

¹⁹ UNDP, Human Development Report, p. 227, 2006.

and evaluation of water projects, while Kenya, Nepal and Rwanda focus on decentralized decision-making at the community level and encourage participation by community and private providers. Capacity-building efforts in Albania, Azerbaijan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia and Montenegro are aimed at securing improvements in environmental management and protecting water quality. In Nicaragua, access to safe water in remote rural areas is considered a component of human capital development.

38. Research and technology transfer in priority areas such as improved water efficiency, water management for rain-fed farming and poverty reduction impacts also received some attention in development cooperation programmes. Partnerships between research institutions, Governments and the private sector can further benefit the development and dissemination of low-water-use technologies.

39. Despite the above-noted positive examples, much of the national and international effort to accelerate progress in water and sanitation remains fragmented. The water and sanitation sector has not attracted large amounts of financing, in contrast to the international response for, HIV/AIDS and education. Having pledged a Water Action Plan at its Summit in Evian, France in 2003, the G-8 has not subsequently made water and sanitation a priority in its development agenda. A number of players have called for the development of a global action plan to serve as a forum for public advocacy and political efforts in mobilizing aid, supporting Governments of developing countries in drawing on local capital markets and enhancing capacity-building in water and sanitation.²⁰ A global plan is not a substitute for local action, but it could build on good policies and serious intent to deliver at the national level.

B. Integrated water resources management

40. Approaches to integrated water resources management are diverse and varied. Specific water resources problems and conditions determine priorities in each country, and the final choice of management solution depends on local culture, tradition and capacity. However, an enabling environment constituting necessary environmental, economic, social, cultural, political and institutional conditions is considered vital to advance the implementation of integrated water resources management. This section provides an initial assessment of the state of implementation of integrated water resources management plan preparation, based on feedback provided by various Governments to a survey questionnaire as part of their national reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development.²¹

1. Preparation of integrated water resources management/water efficiency plans

41. In the absence of well-established, globally accepted indicators for monitoring integrated water resources management, it is difficult to state with certainty the status of integrated water resources management in each country, and to make comparisons across countries. Each country is at a different point of the integrated water resources management implementation stage, depending upon the nature of its

²⁰ UNDP, Human Development Report, p. 70-71, 2006; and Water Aid contribution to Commission on Sustainable Development-16.

²¹ The UN-Water Task Force on IWRM developed a questionnaire which was sent to all countries by the CSD Secretariat. A total of 58 countries responded.

problems and its own understanding of the integrated water resources management framework. The results of the survey and a review of many case studies and country progress reports on Millennium Development Goals highlight certain general trends on the status of integrated water resources management plan preparation.

42. A number of countries that have developed and implemented integrated water resources management plans report that it is too early to assess the results and impact of implementing these plans. Nevertheless, some countries have indicated that this approach has helped in achieving notable results in terms of reduction in water losses; improvement in water quality; flood control; improved restoration of aquatic ecosystems; and expansion in water supply coverage.

43. The process of preparing a water management plan, river basin plan or national water policy is usually led by a government ministry or council comprising a number of ministries. Only a few countries have promoted stakeholders participation in preparing the integrated water resources management plans.

44. Countries that have made some progress in implementing integrated water resources management plans have identified the following five major issues addressed:

- (a) pollution control to improve water quality;
- (b) inefficient use, waste and competition among various uses;
- (c) degradation of ecosystems;
- (d) natural disasters, floods and droughts; and
- (e) water scarcity.

45. Key policy actions and measures that were taken or are being implemented to address these issues include:

- (a) establishment of a coordinating body or mechanism;
- (b) enactment of water codes, laws and regulations;
- (c) rationalization of pricing policies and subsidies together with polluter pays principle;
- (d) enforcement of regulatory regimes, including permits and licenses; and
- (e) strengthening data-collection networks, monitoring and evaluation.

46. The survey results show that, in addition to the above policy measures, countries are implementing actions to varying degrees on both the demand and supply sides to improve the management of water resources. Notable measures include: construction of infrastructure and storage; demand-reduction through water pricing policies, and water-saving infrastructure (such as drip irrigation); recycling and reuse of treated effluent; protection of water sources through regulatory mechanisms; and upgrading of existing infrastructure and distribution systems.

47. Many countries indicate that they have implemented, either fully or partially, various programmes and policies that may constitute important building blocks of full-fledged planning for integrated water resources management.

48. Issues of transboundary integrated water resources management plans, desalination of seawater, rainwater harvesting programmes, initiatives on water

harvesting from coastal fog and integration of drainage facilities in irrigated agriculture did not feature prominently among the priorities of many countries, especially OECD countries.

49. More than half of the respondent countries indicated that cost recovery or progressive tariff structures are in place, while slightly fewer than half had norms and procedures for financial sustainability and viability of water schemes. A few countries reported the use of subsidies or micro-credit programmes to promote use of water-saving technologies.

50. Several key challenges confronting implementation of integrated water resources management, among others, include, among others: lack of technical information and capacity, lack of strong legal and policy framework, difficulties in ensuring the effective participation of all stakeholders, poor land use practices with negative impacts on water resources, lack of a political platform to promote integrated water resources management at all levels and poor sanitation leading to poor water quality.²² In this regard, linking the integrated water resources management approach to the appropriate national development planning process is considered vital to realizing the full potential of water management in achieving the other Millennium Development Goals.

2. Agricultural water management

51. Agriculture continues to be the largest user of global water supplies, accounting for more than 70 per cent. This share will probably increase significantly, given growing water scarcity. While in the past, groundwater provided a profitable new resource, it is now overexploited in many basins.²³ Policies in many countries now favour improvements in the performance of existing schemes, rather than the construction of new systems. This is considered important to reducing water losses in poorly maintained water delivery systems. Water user associations have proved effective in modernization programmes, and many countries indicated the value of a strong role for user participation in decision-making processes related to irrigation water management. Projected water stress, especially as result of climate change, will create a strong push to improve water productivity and to strengthen the use of demand management approaches.

52. Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region in the world, but has a large untapped endowment of water resources. Thus, changes in agricultural water management could help in reducing poverty in this region. In most areas of sub-Saharan Africa, conditions combine to keep farmers locked in a poverty trap of low-yielding subsistence strategies. Yet less than five per cent of renewable water resources are abstracted, and only four per cent of agricultural land is under irrigation. Integrated investments in agricultural water infrastructure, together with markets, technology, institutions and human development, could help increase incomes and reduce poverty, offering sub-Saharan Africa the prospect of economic growth that Asian countries have so successfully pursued.

²² Technical Committee GWP Policy Brief 4 http://www/gwpforum.org/gwp/library/Policy_brief_4_MDGS.pdf.

²³ Reengaging in Agricultural Water Management: Challenges and Options, World Bank Directions in Development, Washington, D.C., 2006.

C. Strengthening water sector monitoring

53. In many developing countries, key information and data needed to get full coverage of the water sector are missing: for example, data on water productivity is not available in a systematic way; gender-related information is not readily available; information on wastewater production and treatment is still anecdotal; and very little is known about water quality. Disputes over water issues, a rapidly growing concern, are not reported in a systematic way, except in the case of transboundary waters. Lack of information and data on groundwater drawdown remains a major challenge.

54. Concerning the state of water sector monitoring, a recent review²⁴ concluded, *inter alia*, that:

(a) most of the global water databases and monitoring systems contain data retrieved from other sources collecting primary data;

(b) no formal mechanism exists to monitor progress on implementation of integrated water resources management plans;

(c) country-level data on water quantity is more widely available than water quality data;

(d) several major monitoring programmes suffer from irregular updating, which affects their timely and regular reporting capacity; and

(e) data quality remains a major issue in assessing the reliability of monitoring systems.

55. Although political commitment to and awareness of water sector monitoring is on the rise, several challenges remain. For example, the main thrust of several monitoring initiatives is water and sanitation services exclusively, while several other elements of the water and sanitation sector (e.g. economic, governance, environmental aspects of water management) have not received due attention. There are no indicators to monitor integrated water resources management. Key obstacles impeding effective sector monitoring include limited technical and institutional capacities at the national and local levels, insufficient allocation of financial resources in national budgets for monitoring activities, inadequate information systems and continuous deterioration of monitoring infrastructure.

56. Despite these constraints and gaps in water sector monitoring, several efforts are noteworthy. The Joint Monitoring Programme of WHO and UNICEF is still regarded as the most relevant mechanism for tracking progress on water and sanitation targets. Tracking progress is based not only on secondary information but on field surveys as well. However, discrepancies have been noted in some cases between the joint monitoring programme data and national figures, due to methodological differences. For example, a recent survey²⁵ of 4,833 drinking points in Togo revealed, *inter alia*, that about 30 per cent of these water schemes had been out of order for more than one year, suggesting that the real access rate is much lower than that estimated and reported by JMP. Overestimating the access rate on

²⁴ Water Monitoring, Mapping Existing Global Systems and Initiatives; Background Document prepared by FAO on behalf of the UN-Water Task Force on Monitoring, 2006.

²⁵ Updating the Situation of the Drinking Water Supply Sub-sector in Rural and Semi-urban Areas of Togo: DGEA/AFD Survey, Ministry of Water and Hydraulic Infrastructure, 2006.

the basis of infrastructure existence alone without taking into account functional status leads to underestimation of the investments required to meet the Millennium Development Goals targets. Addressing such discrepancies should be an important element of efforts to strengthen existing monitoring mechanisms.

57. The World Water Development Report²⁶ by UN-Water provides a periodic, comprehensive review of the state of the world's freshwater resources. In addition to this effort, several other institutions are taking steps to strengthen their monitoring and evaluation systems for the water and sanitation sector. For example, the African Development Bank is now counting the people who benefit from the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative for Africa. Similarly, some private operators are measuring and reporting their own contribution to the Millennium Development Goals.²⁷

58. Monitoring investments in the water sector requires particular attention, especially with regard to monitoring donor fulfilment of aid commitments and efficient spending of budgetary allocations of national Governments in the water and sanitation sector. In general, most national budgets indicate allocations of financial resources for these sectors, but systems to monitor such investments and their impact on meeting water and sanitation targets are insufficiently developed, with the exception of some countries, including Malaysia and Singapore.

59. Monitoring of investment in irrigated agriculture is especially weak, probably due to the lack of internationally agreed targets on this specific issue. Simple country-to-country comparisons on water productivity in agriculture sector are not available. For hydropower development, monitoring of investment and results tends to be project-oriented rather than focusing on the level of integrated water resources management, although there are recent and ongoing efforts in several countries at the basin level, such as the Nam Ngum project in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

60. In recent years, UN-Water has been promoting system-wide coordination and coherence to advance the implementation of global water and sanitation goals. It has established several thematic task forces that are facilitating information exchange, including sharing of experiences and lessons learned, to add value to existing programmes and projects. Its work programme is further supported by three offices: one each for capacity-building, monitoring and reporting, and outreach and communication.

D. Financing water and sanitation services

61. Multilateral donors now account for approximately 33 per cent of aid flows, up from 20 per cent in 2000, with the World Bank's International Development Association and the European Union (including its Water Initiative) the most prominent. Multilateral funding has been more focused on low-income countries and sub-Saharan Africa than bilateral assistance has been. Since 1998, annual International Development Association lending to the water and sanitation sector

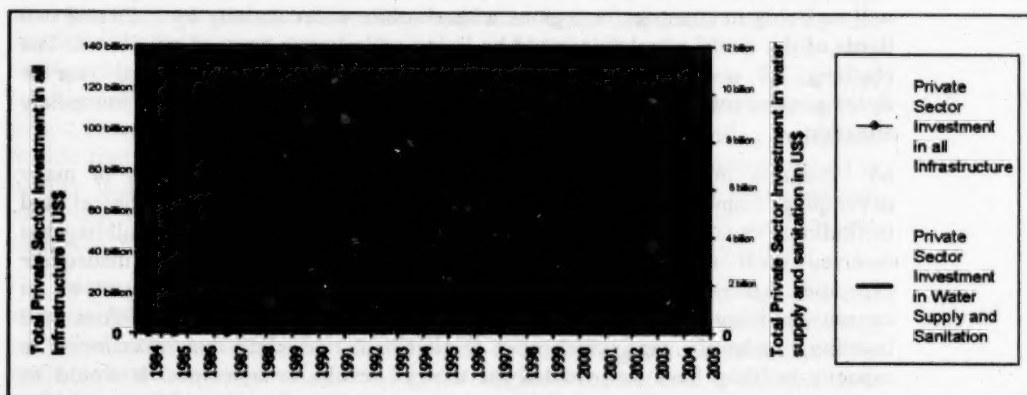
²⁶ World Water Development Report, 2006. <http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/index.shtml>.

²⁷ For example, Suez reports the following figures for its water operations in low income countries (as of 2007): "... during the period of involvement of Suez as operator, 11 million additional people have gained access to safe drinking water (including 9.2 million through home connections), and 5.3 million to improved sanitation".

has averaged \$478 million, increasing steadily to \$585 million in 2006. Much of the International Development Association assistance to water supply and sanitation has been as one component in the context of multi-sector rural and urban development and social protection projects. Like Government spending on water and sanitation, aid flows tend to be skewed towards urban populations. Financing of large-scale water and sanitation infrastructure, mainly in urban areas, accounts for over half of all aid to the sector.²⁸

62. Private sector investment in all infrastructures increased dramatically in the early 1990s, reaching its peak in 1997. The private sector investment flows to the water and sanitation sector also reached their peak level in 1997, but have been very erratic and declined to \$1 billion in 2003. (figure I)

Figure I
Private sector investment in infrastructure, 1984-2005



Source: World Bank Private project investment database (<http://ppi.worldbank.org/>).

63. Total official development assistance (ODA) from members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee fell by 5.1 per cent in 2006 to \$104 billion, which represented 0.30 per cent of members' combined gross national income. In real terms, this is the first fall in ODA since 1997, though the level is still the highest recorded, with the exception of 2005. Excluding a spike in development assistance for Iraq, total development assistance for water and sanitation amounted to \$3.4 billion in 2004.²⁹ In real terms, water and sanitation aid levels in 2005 were lower than in 1997, a marked contrast to education, whose aid commitments doubled over the same period, and a contrast to aid commitments in health as well.³⁰ Moreover, aid to water and sanitation has fallen as a share of overall development assistance. It declined from 8 to 5 per cent, even though the important role of water and sanitation in meeting other development goals is clearly recognized.

²⁸ UNDP, Human Development Report, p. 68, 2006.

²⁹ UNDP, Human Development Report, p. 67, 2006.

³⁰ Water Aid, Global Cause and Effect (2007) and UNDP, Human Development Report, p. 67, 2006.

64. About half of the \$30-35 billion invested globally in irrigation and about \$2.5 billion for water supply and sanitation each year are financed through Government budgets. With regard to the recommendation that countries allocate a specific and adequate budget for sanitation, countries have adopted different strategies and mechanisms. For example, Senegal has allocated budgets for sanitation (2004-2006) from its domestic resources, from its HIPC resources (for sanitation in secondary cities) and from external resources for strengthening capacities.

III. Continuing challenges and opportunities

65. Factors such as population growth, rural to urban migration, and unsustainable consumption patterns are affecting both the quantity and quality of freshwater resources. Projected climate change is likely to intensify the stress on available freshwater resources. Continuation of present trends means that 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity by 2025 and two thirds of the world population could be living under water-stressed conditions. The challenge of saving the lives of three million people who die each year in developing countries due to waterborne diseases continues to deserve immediate attention.

66. Progress in the implementation of water and sanitation targets in many developing countries continues to be held back by inadequate technical and institutional capacities. Ironically, over the last decade or so, capacity-building has received great attention in technical assistance programmes, but inadequate capacities remain an important constraint on achieving the agreed targets, as do capacity-building approaches which are inappropriate to local conditions and inability to identify gaps which need to be filled. It is clear that investments in capacity-building have not yielded the desired results or outcomes. It would be worthwhile to revisit approaches that have been employed so far to determine how these could be made more effective. Other difficulties and obstacles include lack of financial resources; inefficient institutions, policies, laws and regulations; lack of understanding and awareness about integrated water resources management and its relationship to poverty reduction; and limited success in raising funds from local capital markets and the private sector for infrastructure development.

67. Addressing these challenges requires multidimensional efforts systematically targeted at key bottlenecks. Constraints and opportunities vary in each country and even within different parts of a country. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Stronger dialogue between various stakeholders (Governments, donors, civil society, communities and United Nations organizations) is required to conduct sector-wide analyses to identify critical shortcomings and propose policy solutions. Failure to scale up successful experiences requires serious evaluation with focus on the way forward.

68. Meeting an ever-rising demand for food, while, at the same time, reducing poverty and protecting the environment, remains an important challenge in achieving sustainable development in the face of increasingly constrained water resources. In recent years there have been significant advances in enhancing water productivity in agriculture. Known techniques for soil moisture conservation and water harvesting, and some technologies for rain-fed areas such as low-cost

supplemental irrigation, can have high returns. Incentives need to be provided to promote these technologies.

69. Provision of water and sanitation services requires simultaneous actions on many fronts, ranging from capacity-building of public utilities to rehabilitation of existing infrastructure to improved institutional governance. Progress is being made, but these actions need to be intensified at all levels and by all players. Depending upon the specific country situation, these actions should give due attention to providing connection subsidies, promoting differentiated services, making provisions for incorporating alternative service providers, and considering the provision of subsidies to low-income households not relying on the public network. Similarly, Water Operators Partnerships provides an opportunity for promoting South-South cooperation as well as public-private partnerships on a not-for-profit basis to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of public water utilities in provision of sustainable services.

70. The progress made in the development of integrated water resources management plans and the increasing emphasis on the importance of water and sanitation in the current round of poverty reduction strategies have been quite encouraging. These trends need to be sustained, but will require strong support from development partners in capacity-building and technology transfer. Future efforts should focus on improving survey methodologies, including monitoring indicators, so that results can be used to take corrective actions during implementation. It is equally important to demonstrate how investments in water and sanitation can contribute to sustainable development, transforming the lives of poor people especially, rather than providing benefits measurable only in monetary terms.

71. Monitoring progress on internationally agreed targets is critical to guide and mobilize future actions to accelerate the implementation of water and sanitation goals and achieve sustainable development. In this regard, current monitoring mechanisms need strengthening at the global, regional and national levels, and their methodological limitations must be addressed. Further work is needed on indicators to monitor progress on integrated water resources management. Moreover, there is a need to establish stronger linkages, not only among various global mechanisms, but also between global mechanisms and monitoring efforts at the national level.

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Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle

2008-2009 — review session

**Outcomes of the regional implementation meetings
for the sixteenth session of the Commission on
Sustainable Development**

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation") adopted at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 stated that the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit should be effectively pursued at the regional and subregional levels, through the United Nations regional commissions and other regional and subregional institutions and bodies.

2. The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, invited the regional commissions, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission, to consider organizing regional implementation meetings in order to contribute to the work of the Commission, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and in collaboration with other regional and subregional organizations and bodies, as appropriate, as well as the regional offices of funds, programmes and international finance and trade institutions and other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. Such meetings should preferably be held before the review session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and should:

(a) Contribute to advancing the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

* E/CN.17/2008/1.



(b) Focus on the thematic cluster of issues to be addressed in the ongoing implementation cycle;

(c) Provide input to the Secretary-General's reports and the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Those inputs may include identification of obstacles and constraints, new challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and sharing of lessons learned and best practices;

(d) Provide for contributions from major groups, taking into account paragraphs 139 (g) and 149 (c) and (d) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

3. Pursuant to the invitation of the Commission on Sustainable Development, all United Nations regional commissions organized regional implementation meetings in their respective regions prior to the twelfth and the fourteenth sessions of the Commission. The regional implementation meetings were organized within the framework of relevant regional forums or as separate meetings. The outcome documents of the regional implementation meetings provided input to the Secretary-General's reports and created a good basis for the regional discussions held during the twelfth and fourteenth sessions of the Commission.

4. As a contribution to the work of the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will undertake a review of progress achieved at all levels in the implementation of commitments, targets and goals on the thematic cluster agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa, the regional commissions, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission and other regional and subregional organizations, organized regional implementation meetings.

5. The Regional Implementation Meeting for Africa was held in Addis Ababa from 22 to 25 October 2007 within the framework of the fifth meeting of the African Committee on Sustainable Development. The outcome document of the meeting is contained in addendum 1 to the present note.

6. The Regional Implementation Meeting for Western Asia was held in Cairo from 4 to 6 November 2007 in association with the ninth session of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region. The outcome document of the meeting is contained in addendum 4 to the present note.

7. The Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific was held in Jakarta on 26 and 27 November 2007. The outcome document of the meeting is contained in addendum 2 to the present note.

8. The Regional Implementation Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santiago on 28 and 29 November 2007. The outcome document of the meeting is contained in addendum 3 to the present note.

9. The Regional Implementation Meeting for Europe and North America was held in Geneva on 28 and 29 January 2008. The outcome document of the meeting is contained in addendum 5 to the present note.